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THE OUTER LIMITS

THE STRANGE INHABITANTS OF THE ASTEROID BELT...AND THE PLAN TO FOOL THE WORLD!

T-THEY'RE GOING TO TAKE OUR PLACES... W-WHAT WILL BECOME OF US?

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UNITED ARTISTS

New Tools For Space Conquest

ION PROPULSION IS THE SPACE HOPE OF THE FUTURE. A BEAM OF IONIZED PARTICLES LOOKING SOMETHING LIKE THIS STREAM FLOWING THROUGH A TEST CHAMBER FROM AN ION ENGINE MAY SOMEDAY MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR SPACE VEHICLES TO ACHIEVE SPEEDS UP TO 2,000,000 MILES PER DAY...

THIS TINY PIECE OF ELECTRONIC EQUIPMENT MAY NOT LOOK IMPORTANT, BUT SUCH A MINIATURIZED ELEMENT MAKES SPACE TRAVEL POSSIBLE. AN ASTOUNDING NUMBER OF ELECTRONIC PARTS CAN BE BUILT INTO A MINIATURE ELEMENT LIKE THIS...

ALL SPACE CAPSULES ARE DESIGNED FOR SEA DUTY. THIS MODEL OF THE APOLLO CAPSULE IS SHOWN BEING DUNKED IN A TEST POOL, ONE OF MANY SUCH TESTS CONDUCTED AT VARIOUS DROP ANGLES FROM A 143-FOOT TOWER. EACH TIME IT MUST RIGHT ITSELF INTO PROPER POSITION FOR THE ESCAPE OF ITS PASSENGERS. THE STRIPED HEAT SHIELD ALLOWS FOR EASIER CAMERA TRACKING...

THE SPACE CHANGE

THE COUNTDOWN CONTINUES PERFECTLY! ONE HUNDRED TOP SCIENTISTS BEND OVER THEIR DIALS AND COMPUTERS, SMILING WITH SATISFACTION AS THE LAST TEN SECONDS BEFORE LAUNCH APPROACH! ON THE TOP OF THE TOWERING ROCKET RESTS THE GEMINI CAPSULE AND INSIDE IT, TWO ASTRONAUTS, STRAPPED IN THEIR ACCELERATION COUCHES, WAIT TO BE BLASTED HALFWAY TO THE MOON! ALEX ADDISON, PROJECT CHIEF, MAKES A FINAL SWEEPING GLANCE ACROSS THE MONITORS! THEN, HIS EYES FREEZE IN TERRIFIED PANIC...

TEN... NINE... EIGHT... SEVEN...

HOLD! HOLD THE LAUNCH! THE ORBIT CONNECTORS ARE MALFUNCTIONING! IF THAT BIRD BLASTS OFF, THOSE TWO SPACEMEN WILL BE IN AN ORBIT AT THE *END OF SPACE!*

THE OUTER LIMITS

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...SIX... FIVE...

AM I RIGHT OR WRONG?

RIGHT! THE ELLIPTICAL ORIENTOR *ISN'T* CHECKING OUT!

AT THAT EXACT INSTANT, INSIDE THE SMALL, GEAR-PACKED CAPSULE, TWO SETS OF TRAINED EYES FOCUS ON THE SAME RED BLINKING LIGHT...

RALPH, THE ELLIPTICAL ORIENTOR--

THEY MUST SEE THAT AT CONTROL! THEY'LL HAVE TO *HOLD!*

ALEX ADDISON WHIRLS AND SHOUTS, TRYING TO DROWN OUT THE MONOTONE AUTOMATIC COUNTER...

FOUR... THREE...TWO... ONE...*LAUNCH!*

HOLD! IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN-- *HOLD!*

ABORT

TOO LATE! THE AUTOMATIC LAUNCH IS MADE! A MALFUNCTION IN THE EMERGENCY ABORT SYSTEM ALLOWS THE LAUNCH! WITH AN EXPLOSIVE ROAR, THE BOOSTER ROCKETS PUMP HARD! SMOKE AND FLAMES SPURT AND THE ROCKET BEGINS TO SLOWLY RISE AND BURST FREE FROM EARTH...

UP AND UP, THE TOWERING ROCKET RACES, SWEEPING ITS VITAL CAPSULE SPACEWARD INTO THE WAITING VOID...

USA

VROOM!

QUICK! FIRE THE ESCAPE TOWER!

AS THE ROCKET ROARS ON BEYOND EARTH'S THINNING ATMOSPHERE, SKILLED HANDS WORK DESPERATELY...

N-NO USE, ALEX! THERE'S A POWER FAILURE ON THAT *WHOLE* RELAY PANEL! I CAN'T FREE THE CAPSULE OR CHANGE THE TRAJECTORY!

THEN, A VOICE FROM EARTH, NOW A THOUSAND MILES BELOW, SOUNDS FROM THE SPEAKER...

RALPH, LARRY--THIS IS CONTROL! YOU'RE GOING TO BE HURLED INTO AN EXTREME ORBIT THAT WILL CARRY YOU **FAR** OUT INTO SPACE! WE **CAN'T** CHECK IT FROM THIS END! TRY MANUAL CONTROL! IT'S UP TO **YOU!**

RALPH

ARRY

THE LAST STAGE OF THE GIANT ROCKET HURLS THE CAPSULE ONWARD, BLASTING IT DEEPER INTO A DOOMING ORBIT...

QUICKLY, THE ASTRONAUTS FREE THEMSELVES FROM THEIR COUCHES AND WORK ON EMERGENCY CIRCUITS...

N-NO GO, HERE, RALPH!

THERE'S AN ELECTRICAL FAILURE IN THIS BIRD AND IT'S *LOCKING* ALL CIRCUITS!

THEN, AS THE SPACE CRAFT HURLS ONWARD, RADIO CONTACT GROWS INCREASINGLY FAINT...

WE CAN'T CHANGE THINGS FROM--

MORE POWER! CAN'T YOU BOOST THEIR SIGNALS?

NO, SIR! I'M ON FULL AMPLIFICATION NOW!

QUICKLY, COMPUTERS AND SCIENTISTS BEGIN TO PLOT THE CAPSULE'S NEW ORBIT...

IF MY ROUGH CALCULATIONS ARE RIGHT, ALEX, THAT BABY WON'T START BACK BEFORE SHE HITS THE *ASTEROID BELT!*

THEY HAVE FOOD FOR FOUR DAYS! AIR FOR FIVE! HOW LONG BEFORE THIS ORBIT BRINGS THEM BACK?

SWIFTLY, SKILLED HANDS PUNCH OUT THE FACTS ON THE COMPUTER AND THE ANSWERING TAPE ALMOST INSTANTLY SPEWS OUT...

NINE DAYS--THAT'S THE MINIMUM RETURN TIME!

THEY'LL HAVE SUFFOCATED FOUR DAYS BEFORE THEIR FLYING COFFIN BRINGS THEM BACK TO US FOR BURIAL!

ON BOARD THE GEMINI, NOW OUT OF CONTACT WITH EARTH, THE TWO ASTRONAUTS HAVE THE SAME FOREBODING PROBLEM BE-FORE THEM...

NINE DAYS AT THE EARLIEST BEFORE WE CAN GET BACK ON THIS ORBIT!

AGAIN AND AGAIN, THEY VAINLY TRY TO BREAK THEIR ORBIT --AND FAIL! THEN, THEY SETTLE BACK, RECORDING THEIR IMPRESSIONS AND OBSERVING THE STARTLING NEW SPACE WORLD OUTSIDE...

LOOK AT HER, LARRY! NO ONE'S EVER BEEN THIS CLOSE TO THE MOON!

OR THIS FAR FROM EARTH!

A GIANT TELESCOPE FOLLOWS THE WANDERING FLIGHT...

NO--CAN'T BE SURE THE CAPSULE'S IN FOCUS ANY LONGER! IT'S TOO SMALL TO BE CERTAIN! THEY'RE ***LOST*** AMONG THE SPACE DEBRIS OUT THERE!

PROJECT CHIEF ALEX ADDISON CALLS ON THE ASTRONAUTS' TWO STUNNED WIVES...

WE ALL KNEW THERE WAS SOME ELEMENT OF RISK--

BUT ***WHY*** COULDN'T YOU HAVE ***HELD*** THE COUNTDOWN IN TIME?

BLACK BORDERED HEADLINES BREAK OUT ON THE NATION'S NEWSSTANDS, AS ANGRY READERS GATHER....

THEY'VE ***NO RIGHT*** TO RISK LIVES FOR THIS SPACE NONSENSE!

TWO MEN CONDEMNED TO DEATH BECAUSE OF SOME STUPID MECHANICAL FAILURE! IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE!

THEN REPORTERS SWARM AROUND ALEX ADDISON...

IS THERE ***ANY*** CHANCE?

YOU'VE READ THE OFFICIAL RELEASE!... THEY'LL RUN OUT OF OXYGEN BEFORE THEY CAN RETURN! AS WE STATED, THAT ***ALL*** CIRCUITS ON A PANEL SHOULD SIMULTANEOUSLY FAIL IS ALMOST MATHEMATICALLY IMPOSSIBLE--BUT IT ***HAPPENED!***

TWO DAYS LATER, THE CAPSULE STILL SPEEDS ON ITS INEVITABLE WAY...

LUNCH TIME!

THANKS! THE CONDEMNED MEN ATE A HEARTY MEAL-- ALL THEY COULD *SQUEEZE* OUT OF A TUBE!

MARS IS COMING UP! MAYBE WE'LL BE ABLE TO SEE WHAT MAKES THE CANALS!

YEAH--BUT NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW WHAT WE DISCOVER!

UNWILLING TO GIVE UP, THE MEN VAINLY ATTEMPT TO CORRECT THEIR FAILING ROCKET COURSE...

ANY LUCK?

WE'RE BEATING A DEAD HORSE! THIS SYSTEM IS NO-GO AND IT'S *STAYING* THAT WAY!

HOURS LATER, SOMETHING MAKES THEM STIR FROM THEIR LETHARGY...

RALPH! WE'RE PICKING UP SOME KIND OF ***RADIO STATIC!***

CONTROL MUST BE TRYING TO REACH US, LARRY!

BUT IN THE BUNKER, THERE IS ONLY A SENSE OF SILENT LOSS...

NO CONTACT?

ALL ATTEMPTS-- ***NEGATIVE!***

HOW IS THEIR FOOD SUPPLY?

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO... THERE'S NOT MUCH TIME LEFT!

AND DEEP IN SPACE...

GREAT LAST MEAL!

WELL, FROM HERE ON, WE LOSE A LITTLE WEIGHT!

ON THE FIFTH DAY, THE DAY THE CAPSULE'S OXYGEN SUPPLY IS CALCULATED TO END, A SUDDEN BLIP FLASHES ON THE RADAR SCREEN...

MR. ADDISON, *HURRY!* SOMETHING IS HEADING FOR EARTH AND IT'S COMING FROM THE DIRECTION OF THE *GEMINI CAPSULE!*

FOR HALF AN HOUR, AS COMPUTERS PROJECT THE COURSE OF THE STRANGE, STARTLING, UNEXPLAINED OBJECT, THEY STUDY THE RADAR-SCOPE...

IT HAS THE RIGHT SIZE AND SPEED FOR THE CAP-SULE! IF ONLY--

ADDISON! I'M IN RADIO CONTACT WITH THE CAPSULE AGAIN!

THEN, THAT BLIP *IS* THE GEMINI! BUT HAVE THEY ENOUGH AIR TO LAST THEM?

NO VOICE CONTACT IS MADE, BUT HOPE RISES AS THE CAPSULE NEARS! THE ASTRONAUTS' WIVES ARE SUMMONED! THEIR FACES TENSE WITH PRAYER; THEY WATCH ...

FIRE RETRO-ROCKETS!

RETRO-ROCKETS FLARE! DOWN THE SPACE-CONQUERING CAPSULE COMES, CUSHIONING ITS LANDING ON FIERY, JET BLASTS...

VOOOM!

A MOMENT LATER, THREE FIGURES RACE ACROSS THE LANDING SITE TO THE GREAT CAPSULE! THEN, THE HATCH SWINGS OPEN...

THEY RE ALIVE!

LARRY!

RALPH!

YES, DEAR, WE MADE IT!

LUCY WE RE BACK HOME!

STRANGE MASQUERADE

WITH SICKENING SHOCK, THE BEWILDERED WIVES GAPE AT THE HUMANOIDS WHO CLAIM TO BE THEIR HUSBANDS! FLASHBULBS POP, TV CAMERA CREWS RECORD, AND THE SCIENTISTS GROPE FOR AN EXPLANATION OF THE TERRIFYING TRANSFORMATION...

R-RALPH... LARRY... BUT *HOW--?*

THAT'S YOUR JOB TO FIGURE OUT, ALEX! RIGHT NOW, I JUST WANT TO HOLD ZOE IN MY ARMS AND KNOW I'M ***REALLY HOME!***

THE OUTER LIMITS

N-NO!! PLEASE!

BUT, ZOE, IT'S ME, RALPH!

TREMBLING, THE TWO WIVES REACH OUT TO TOUCH THE ALIEN HANDS...

COLD... INHUMANLY COLD!

I DON'T FEEL COLD! BUT FROM THE WAY EVERYONE IS LOOKING AT US, LARRY, MAYBE WE SHOULD HAVE DIED OUT IN SPACE!

ALEX, MAYBE IT'S A HOAX! MAYBE THERE *IS* INTELLIGENT LIFE OUT THERE AND THEY'RE *PRETENDING* TO BE OUR ASTRONAUTS!

THAT WOULD BE AN EASIER EXPLANATION TO ACCEPT THAN THAT THEY VE CHANGED! BUT WE CAN EASILY *TEST* THEIR IDENTITY!

THE TWO MONSTROUS LOOKING SPACE VOYAGERS ARE BROUGHT INSIDE FOR QUESTIONING.

...AND WHAT IS MY BROTHER'S MIDDLE NAME?

ERIC! AND HIS ADDRESS IS 22 MAPLEWOOD DRIVE!

WHAT'S YOUR MOTHER'S PHONE NUMBER?

MOM'S--LET'S SEE ...I ALWAYS GET IT TWISTED--AH! IT'S 324-5565!

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, A SIMULTANEOUS TELEVISED BROADCAST OF THE LANDING AND QUESTIONING STOPS ALL ACTIVITY! A FASCINATED BUT FEARFUL NATION WATCHES...

BOTH WIVES AGREE THE CREATURES *HAVE* ANSWERED ALL HIGHLY PERSONAL QUESTIONS CORRECTLY! BELIEVE IT OR NOT, THEY *ARE* OUR TWO ASTRONAUTS!

YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! I GOT EYES! THEY RE *THINGS* FROM OUTER SPACE!

YEAH! AND THEY RE *TRICKING US!* THEY RE COMING TO *ATTACK US!*

YOU HEARD THE ANNOUNCER SAY THEY ANSWERED THE QUESTIONS *ONLY* THE ASTRONAUTS COULD ANSWER!

SO THEY FOOLED YOU! IT'S *ALL* A PUT UP JOB TO LULL US TO SLEEP BEFORE THE BIG INVASION COMES!

AS WORD OF THE GROWING PUBLIC PANIC REACHES WASHINGTON, THE WHITE HOUSE CALLS THE MISSILE CENTER...

YES, MR. PRESIDENT, I CAN UNDERSTAND YOUR DESIRE TO CALM THE NATION'S NEEDLESS FEARS! I *WILL* CHECK OUT THEIR STORY AND BE CERTAIN THEY ARE WHO WE THINK THEY ARE!

FOR AN HOUR, THE TWO WIVES ARE ORDERED TO ASK MORE AND MORE DETAILED QUESTIONS...

MY HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPLE? OH, YES! MR. CARLUCCI!

WHAT LETTERS I WON AT COLLEGE? I GOT MY LETTERS IN BASEBALL AND TRACK!

MR. ADDISON, IF RALPH'S MIND ISN'T INSIDE THAT BODY, HE *COULDN'T* ANSWER ALL THESE QUESTIONS SO FAST AND ACCURATELY!

AN HOUR LATER, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES SPEAKS ON ALL TELEVISION CHANNELS TO A TENSE, WONDERING NATION...

MY FELLOW AMERICANS ON THE FINEST AUTHORITY, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THE STARTLING FACT THAT THE TWO BEINGS WHO RETURNED IN OUR GEMINI SPACE CAPSULE *ARE* THE SAME TWO ASTRONAUTS WE SENT INTO SPACE ON THEIR PERILOUS MISSION!

THE MAN IN THIS PHOTO IS ASTRONAUT CAPTAIN LAWRENCE BRAND!

WHILE THIS PERSON IS COMMANDER RALPH FOREST!

THEY'RE CRAZY!

LOOK, BUSTER.. IF THE PRESIDENT SAYS THAT'S WHO IT IS--THAT'S WHO IT *IS*!

WHILE AT THE MISSILE CENTER, ISOLATED IN A SPECIAL ROOM FOR MEDICAL STUDY, TWO MEN HEAR THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH...

IT WORKED!

YES! THEY REALLY THINK WE *ARE* THE ASTRONAUTS WE CAPTURED! NOW WE *CAN* STUDY THEM AND MAKE CERTAIN WHEN WE STRIKE, WE CANNOT FAIL TO *CONQUER!*

FAR OUT IN DEEP SPACE, IN THE ASTEROID BELT, TWO HELPLESS FIGURES LIE BEFORE THEIR CUNNING CAPTORS...

THE QUESTIONING SEEMS TO HAVE ENDED! DISCONNECT THE MEMORY-FATHOMER!

WAIT! WE ARE GETTING A SIGNAL!

FIND OUT WHAT OUR REACTION TO MR. ADDISON'S FAILURE TO STOP THE COUNTDOWN SHOULD BE!

INSTANTLY, THE QUESTION IS RELAYED INTO THE CAPTIVE BRAINS...

GETTING RESPONSE SIGNAL FROM LARRY!

PASS IT ON!

YOUR ATTITUDE SHOULD BE PURELY PROFESSIONAL! YOU ONLY WANT TO KNOW THE CAUSE OF THE MECHANICAL FAILURE!... BUT THIS SHOULD GIVE YOU AN EXCUSE FOR STUDYING *THEIR* SPACE TECHNOLOGY AND ALERT US IF THEIR SHIPS COULD IN ANY WAY UPSET OUR PLANS!

THE QUESTIONING COMPLETED, THE EARTH PRISONERS ARE LED INTO A STRANGE, STARK ROOM! AS THEIR CAPTORS LEAVE, FOUR WALLS OF COLORED LIGHT SUDDENLY FLASH ON...

I DON'T THINK THE LIGHT'S TO READ BY!

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRY TO WALK OUT *THROUGH IT!*

QUICKLY, LARRY BRAND STRIDES FORWARD TO THE WALL OF LIGHT! SUDDENLY, AS HIS [redacted] PRESSES INTO THE BEAM'S FIELD, A TREMENDOUS COUNTER-FORCE HURLS HIM BACK ..

A FORCE FIELD OF LIGHT!

MIGHT AS WELL HAVE US CHAINED IN IRONS! BUT NO - MAYBE THERE *IS* A WAY TO BEAT THIS LIGHT GIMMICK!

REACHING INTO HIS POCKET WITH A SMILE OF HOPE, RALPH FOREST PULLS OUT A MINIATURIZED CAMERA .

THEY CHECKED OUR POCKETS, BUT FIGURED THIS IS HARMLESS!

ISN'T IT? IT'S JUST A CAMERA AND STROBE LIGHT!

THE INTENSITY OF THIS BULB IS FIFTY TIMES THAT OF THE STANDARD FLASH! IF A LITTLE LIGHT KEEPS US BACK, LET'S SEE WHAT A LOT OF LIGHT DOES TO THEIR FORCE FIELD!

AS THE INCANDESCENCE OF THE FLASH BURSTS AGAINST THE DIMMER LIGHT WALL, TWO MEN HURL THEMSELVES AT THE MATTERLESS WALL. .

IT'S WORKING--WE'RE GETTING THROUGH!

WE'RE FREE! BUT HOW DO WE GET *OFF* THIS ASTEROID?

LET'S SEE WHAT THESE PEOPLE USE FOR TRANSPORTATION--AND BORROW IT!

CAUTIOUSLY, THEY SCOUT THEIR STRANGE SURROUNDINGS, DUG DEEP IN THE ASTEROID'S INTERIOR...

THEIR WHOLE WORLD IS UNDERGROUND!

THERE! THAT MUST BE THEIR MOTOR POOL! IT LOOKS LIKE THE *FLYING SAUCER* RUMORS HAD A BASIS IN FACT!

THEN SUDDENLY, AN ALIEN GUARD STRIDES INTO VIEW .

HIT HIM HIGH!

ROGER! YOU HIT HIM LOW AND HARD!

BEFORE THE ALIEN CREATURE CAN CRY OUT, THE TWO MEN HIT WITH STUNNING EFFECT...

THAT'LL KEEP HIM QUIET FOR A WHILE!

LET'S HOPE IT'S LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO CHECK OUT THOSE SAUCERS AND FIND OUT WHAT MAKES THEM *GO!*

IN THE COCKPIT OF THE STRANGE CRAFT, THEIR SKILLED GLANCES TAKE IN THE CONTROLS...

I SEE THE BOOSTER AND STABILIZER CONTACTS!

LUCKILY, THEY ARE ON AN OXYGEN BREATHING CYCLE, TOO! LET'S LOOK FOR DIRECTIONAL INDICATORS!

BUT AS THEY COMPLETE THEIR RUNDOWN, A BEAM OF LIGHT SUDDENLY FLASHES! ITS FOCUS STRIKES RALPH FOREST, WHO SLUMPS TO THE CABIN FLOOR...

RALPH!

LARRY BRAND'S FINGER STABS AT THE CONTROLS! DOWN COMES THE PROTECTIVE HATCH, AS HE CUTS IN THE ROCKETS...

WHATEVER THEIR RAY GUN DID TO RALPH, ITS BEAM CAN'T PENETRATE THIS SAUCER'S SKIN!

WITH A SUDDEN ROAR, THE SAUCER COMES ALIVE, ROCKETS BLARING...

VROOM!

THEN LARRY BRAND SKILLFULLY TURNS THE SAUCER! ITS HOT BLAST STRIKES AND SEARS...

THAT SHOULD GAIN US SOME TIME! NOW TO GET OUT OF THIS HANGAR!

AN ALARM RINGS, SHRIEKING THROUGH THE CORE OF THE UNDERGROUND HANGAR, AS THE SAUCER STARTS FORWARD! THEN LARRY SEES THE GIANT DOORS CLOSING TO ENTRAP HIM...

GOT TO MAKE IT *OUT* OF HERE!

BUT BEFORE THE DOORS CAN CLAMP SHUT, THE SAUCER SLIDES OUT! LARRY BRAND GLANCES BACK. BEHIND HIM IS THE ASTEROID AND LOOMING LIKE A DOMINATING MOON ABOVE IS THE NEARBY PLANET MARS.

I'D BETTER CUT THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND CHECK POOR RALPH!

A GROAN FROM RALPH'S LIPS GIVES HOPE! FINDING A TUBE OF LIQUID, HE SQUEEZES IT INTO HIS FELLOW ASTRONAUT'S MOUTH

THEY'RE ON THE SAME BREATHING CYCLE AS WE-- HERE'S HOPING OUR METABOLISM IS CLOSE ENOUGH TO MAKE THEIR FOOD SAFE!

RALPH FOREST STIRS AND SLOWLY RISES! BUT THEIR MOMENT OF CONTENTMENT IS SHORT.

LARRY..

I SEE THEM! AND I *DON'T* LIKE THE ODDS!

QUICKLY, THE FORMATION BEGINS TO CLOSE WITH ITS TARGET! THE ALIENS TRIGGER A RAY BLAST

REMEMBER OUR ORDERS— THEY HAVE LEARNED *TOO MUCH*—THEY KNOW WE INTEND TO INVADE THEIR PLANET! THEY MUST ***NOT*** ESCAPE!

THE HAND GUN JUST KNOCKED ME OUT! BUT THIS LOOKS LIKE HEAVY ARTILLERY!

I'VE NO INTENTION OF LETTING THEM HIT US TO LEARN JUST HOW EFFECTIVE IT IS!

THEN LARRY BRAND MANUEVERS THE SAUCER DEFTLY, CUTTING BEHIND SOME DRIFTING SPACE JUNK IN THE ASTEROID BELT

WE DON'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY RAY GUNS ON THIS BABY, RALPH, BUT MAYBE OUR ROCKETS AND THAT PIECE OF SPACE DEBRIS CAN HELP US!

TURNING ON ALL ROCKETS FULL, THE HOT, POWERFUL BLAST SHATTERS THE SPACE JUNK, BURSTS IT APART...

KROOM!

AS THE SHATTERED MATTER SCATTERS INTO SPACE, THE ONCOMING SAUCERS CUT WILDLY TO AVOID BEING HIT AND HOLED...

AS THE ALIENS WATCH THE DEADLY MISSILES, LARRY BRAND SWIFTLY MAUEVERS INTO A FIELD OF FLOATING DEBRIS, BURYING THE CRAFT IN THE CAMOUFLAGING MATTER...

OKAY, RALPH! NOW JUST PRAY THEY DON'T SPOT US!

HOLDING A MATCHING ORBIT WITH THE FLOATING ASTEROID MATERIAL, THE SAUCER HIDES, AND MOMENTS LATER...

THEY'VE PASSED!

I KNOW HOW TO JOCKEY THIS SPACE BUGGY, BUT WILL IT TAKE US CLEAR BACK TO EARTH--AND IN TIME TO *WARN THEM?*

OFF THROUGH THE GREAT GAP OF SPACE, THE SAUCER RACES EARTHWARD! THE ASTEROID BELT LOOMS BEHIND! FAR AHEAD, THE DESTINATION--*HOME!* BUT AS THEY BLAST EARTHWARD, AN EVEN GREATER URGENCY RUSHES THEM ONWARD! BEHIND, CUNNING MINDS AND SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY ARE PREPARING TO ATTACK EARTH AND, DESPITE THEIR MOMENTARY LEAD, THEY REALIZE THE RACE IS NOT ALWAYS WON BY THE SWIFTEST!

THEIR STRIKE

LARRY, THIS BABY REALLY CLIPS ALONG!

YES, RALPH! AT HER RATE OF SPEED, I CALCULATE OUR ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL BACK ON EARTH IS ABOUT FOUR HOURS!

THE OUTER LIMITS

MEANWHILE THE MASQUERADING INVADERS CARRY OUT THEIR VITAL RECONNAISANCE...

STILL NO CLUE AS TO WHAT BUGGED THE ELECTRICAL SYSTEM?

NO, LARRY, AND YOU'VE JUST HAD A CHANCE TO GO OVER THE WHOLE CAPSULE!

ALEX, HAVE WE EVER THOUGHT OF PUTTING *WEAPONS* ON THESE SPACECRAFT OF OURS?

WHY, NO! WHAT A STRANGE QUESTION, RALPH? *WHY* DID YOU ASK?

NOTHING, ALEX... EXCEPT... WELL, WE GOT PRETTY *FAR OUT* ON THIS TRIP AND FELT A BIT NAKED WITHOUT ANY WEAPONS!

OUR SHIPS ARE RIGGED FOR RESEARCH-- *NOT* COMBAT!

ON THE ASTEROID, AT THE CONTROL CENTER, ACTIVITY ACCELERATES AS GIANT CALCULATORS SHOW THE ESCAPING FLYING SAUCER IS NOW BEYOND ALL POSSIBLE PURSUIT...

COMMANDER TO AGENTS VRIG AND LORT! IMPORTANT MESSAGE-- STAND BY!

AND THOUSANDS OF MILES ACROSS SPACE, IN THE PRIVACY OF THEIR TEMPORARY QUARTERS...

THE CAPTURED ALIENS HAVE *ESCAPED!* THEY ARE HEADING FOR EARTH! USE THIS AS A CHANCE TO *TEST* THEIR WEAPONS AGAINST OUR SPACE CRAFT! UNDERSTAND!

YES! SO FAR AS ASCERTAINED--THEY HAVE *NO* SPACE WEAPONRY!

MEANWHILE, AN URGENT CALL SENDS ALEX ADDISON RACING TO THE SPACE-PROBING RADARSCOPE.

THE SET CHECKS OUT A-OKAY! IT'S REAL! SOMETHING'S COMING FROM THE ASTEROID BELT AT FANTASTIC SPEED AND ITS PROJECTED COURSE IS FOR *EARTH!*

IN MINUTES, THE WHOLE CENTER IS ALERTED TO THE STRANGE OBJECT HURTLING TOWARD EARTH. .

ALEX, I THINK WE'D BETTER HAVE A WORD WITH YOU-- PRIVATE!

THE DOOR TO AN OFFICE CLOSES...

A FLYING SAUCER IS APPROACHING EARTH AND SHE'S HOSTILE!

YOU'VE PUT US THROUGH MEDICAL TESTS TO DETERMINE WHAT CHANGED OUR CELLULAR STRUCTURE - WELL, WE DIDN'T WANT TO PANIC ANYONE! WE WERE WAITING TILL THE SHOCK OF OUR APPEARANCE DIED DOWN! BUT WHAT CHANGED US WAS A **BLAST** FROM A SAUCER'S **RAY GUN!**

THAT'S WHY WE ASKED IF WE WERE WORKING ON ANY **WEAPONS!**

BUT THAT SAME RAY BLAST ALSO **CHANGED** OUR ORBIT AND MIRACULOUSLY GOT US HOME! NOW YOU KNOW THE TRUTH-- YOU'D BETTER GET THE AIR FORCE OUT TO **SHOOT HER DOWN!**

PRODDED INTO ACTION BY THE STARTLING WARNING, ALEX ADDISON CONTACTS FIGHTER COMMAND! IN MINUTES, THE NEWEST, MOST HEAVILY ARMED JETS SCRAMBLE SKYWARD...

STING LEADER TO FLIGHT! OUR TARGET IS GOING TO BE FAST AND **DIFFERENT!** SHE'S A FLYING SAUCER! REPEAT - A **FLYING SAUCER!**

CAREFULLY, RALPH FOREST WORKS THE SAUCER'S CONTROLS, CUTTING DOWN THE RE-ENTRY SPEED, AS IT HURTLES THROUGH EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE..

SAY! A WELCOME HOME COMMITTEE!

YOU'RE A BORN OPTIMIST! THOSE JETS ARE AFTER US!

AS THE FLIGHT SPOTS THE ONCOMING SAUCER, TRAINED FINGERS WORK THE CONTROLS! SUDDENLY, HEAT-HOMING ROCKETS BLAST SKYWARD...

WHOOOSH!

RALPH FOREST HITS THE SUPER-DRIVE! WITH A SUDDEN SPURT, THE SAUCER BLASTS AHEAD, TURNING AND TWISTING, AS IT DODGES THE SLOWER, LETHAL MISSILES...

WE DUCKED THOSE SIDEWINDERS, BUT OUR LUCK *CAN'T* LAST!

SEEING ONE LONE HOPE, RALPH FOREST CUTS SWIFTLY FOR THE BASE! TURNING TAIL, HE BLASTS FULL WITH ALL ROCKETS...

RALPH, YOU'RE KICKING UP A STORM--A *DUST STORM!*

JUST WHAT I'M COUNTING ON TO *HIDE US* LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO GET CLEAR OF THIS SPACE BUGGY IN CASE OUR FLY-BOYS START TO PEPPER HER AGAIN!

SPRINTING FROM THE CONTROL BUNKER, ALEX ADDISON AND HIS ASSISTANTS GAPE INCREDULOUSLY...

L-LARRY! RALPH!! BUT HOW--?

IT'S A LONG STORY, ALEX-- AND NONE OF US HERE ON EARTH HAS *MUCH TIME!*

IN QUICK, CLIPPED SENTENCES, THEY TELL THEIR STRANGE STORY ..

THEN THE TWO IMPOSTERS HERE...

ARE *SPIES!* AND DANGEROUS ONES BECAUSE THEY CAN CONTACT THE OTHERS AND MUST HAVE TOLD THEM OUR WEAKNESSES!

THERE THEY GO! *THE SAUCER!* THEY MUST BE HEADING FOR IT!

GET SECURITY OUT.. *FAST!!*

A SECURITY JEEP'S SIREN SCREAMS, AS IT RACES TOWARD THE LANDED SAUCER! THEN, THE ALIENS PULL OUT A HIDDEN WEAPON, TURN AND FIRE...

THE GUARDS ..

...HURT, BUT ALIVE! OUR REAL TROUBLE IS ONLY *STARTING!*

AGAIN THE RADAR ROOM SIGNALS URGENTLY...

NO DOUBT THOSE BLIPS ARE *MORE* FLYING SAUCERS! THE INVASION IS *ON!*

OUR JETS CAN'T CATCH THEM...OUR HOMING MISSILES CAN'T EVEN KEEP UP WITH THEM! *NOW* DO WE STOP THEM?

IN DESPERATION, ALL SECTIONS ARE ALERTED FOR IDEAS! THEN, IN THE SPACE MEDICINE LAB, ONE SCIENTIST'S FACE LIGHTS UP WITH HOPE...

WHEN WE THOUGHT THOSE CREATURES WERE LARRY AND RALPH, WE CARRIED OUT INTENSE INTERNAL MEDICAL RESEARCH! *ONE* FINDING MAY HELP US!

WHAT WAS THAT?

THEIR *EAR* STRUCTURE WAS REVOLUTIONARILY DIFFERENT FROM OURS! IF MY READINGS ARE RIGHT, THEY SHOULD HAVE *EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO HIGH-PITCHED SOUNDS!*

JUST *WHAT* WOULD SOUND DO TO THEM!

PITCH IT HIGH ENOUGH AND IT'LL DESTROY THEIR SENSE OF BALANCE AND ORIENTATION!

BUT BEFORE THEY CAN ACT, THE ADVANCING SAUCERS CUT MOCKINGLY ABOVE THEM...

WE NEED *TIME*--

MAYBE THE AIR FORCE CAN BUY US A *LITTLE* TIME!

INTO THE AIR, THE JET FIGHTERS SCREAM! CLOSING AT THEIR SUPERSONIC SPEED, THEY TRY TO DIVE AND FIRE AT THE TAUNTING SAUCERS THAT SLOW DOWN BELOW THEM...

GET THOSE BANDITS! *FIRE!!*

BUT A BURST OF ADDED SPEED THROWS OFF THE MISSILE AND THEN, THE SAUCER'S RAY GUN SHATTERS THE HELPLESS FIGHTER!

AT THE WHITE HOUSE, AN EMERGENCY DEFENSE MEETING CONTINUES...

SHOULD I AUTHORIZE THE AIR FORCE TO DROP AN ATOMIC BOMB THAT WILL EXPLODE *IN THE AIR?* IT'LL SACRIFICE A MILLION CITIZENS-- BUT COULD SAVE THE NATION!

WAIT, MR PRESIDENT! WE ARE TRYING ONE OTHER WEAPON! BUT IF THAT FAILS--

ONTO THE BASE'S GROUNDS, THE SCIENTISTS HURRY AN IMPROVISED SOUND DEVICE! ITS SHRILL NOISE BUILDS SLOWLY, TREMBLING THE GROUND AROUND THEM AND THEN, THANKFULLY REACHING A PITCH BEYOND HUMAN HEARING...

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE SOUND WAVES REACH AND PENETRATE THE VICTORIOUS SAUCERS! THE ALIENS CLAP HANDS TO THEIR EARS! DIZZILY, THEY STAGGER ABOUT...

M-MY EARS ARE BREAKING!

FEEL... *DIZZY*...

ONE SAUCER DETACHES ITSELF FROM THE AERIAL BATTLE, CUTTING FOR THE SOUND-MAKERS BELOW...

EEEEEEEEEE!

IT WAS A LONGSHOT --AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT *FAILED!*

BUT BEFORE THE CREW CAN FIRE, A NAUSEOUS DIZZINESS STRIKES...

OUT OF CONTROL, THE LOWEST SAUCER SPINS WILDLY, SMASHING WITH A ROAR...

BWOOM!

IT WORKED! IT *WORKED!*

FUNNY, THEY CAME TO *STUDY US*-- BUT THAT GAVE US THE CHANCE TO *STUDY THEM* AND LEARN *HOW* TO DEFEAT THEM!

MINUTES LATER, THE LAST THREATENING SAUCER LIES A SMOLDERING WRECK, HER WOULD-BE CONQUERING CREW DEAD...

OH, WHILE YOU BOYS WERE GONE, WE RIGGED ANOTHER GEMINI CAPSULE FOR LAUNCH! LIKE TO CREW IT?

SURE-- BUT ON A *DIFFERENT* ORBIT!

The END

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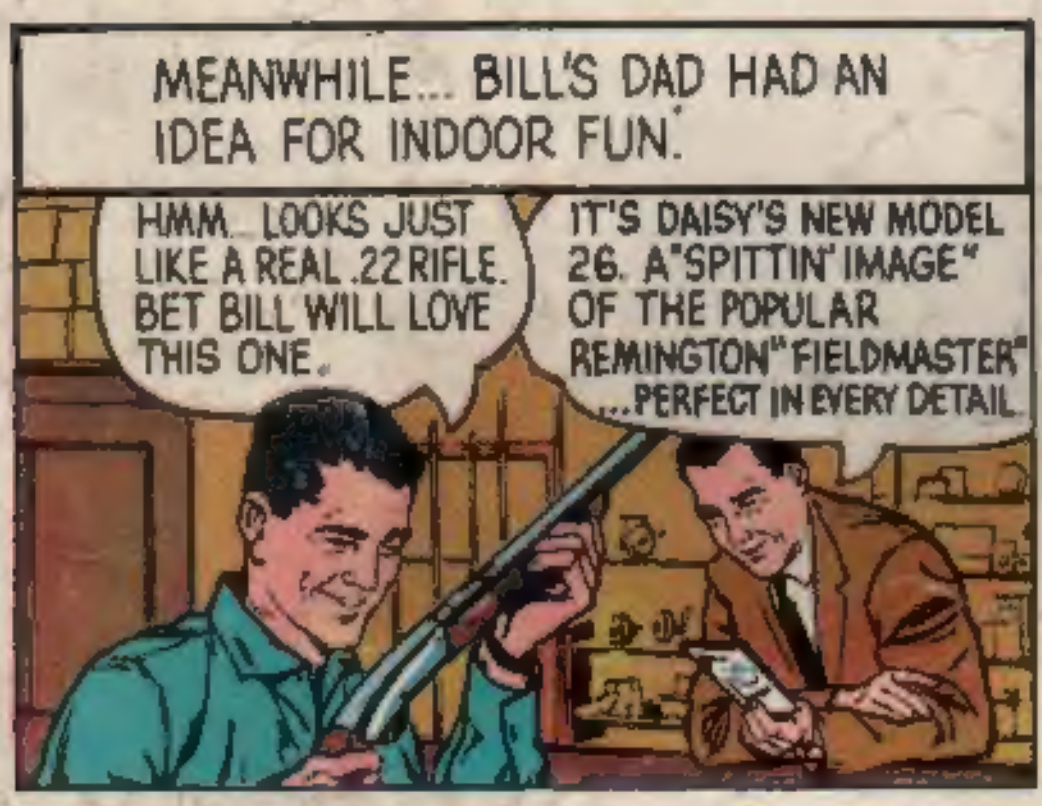
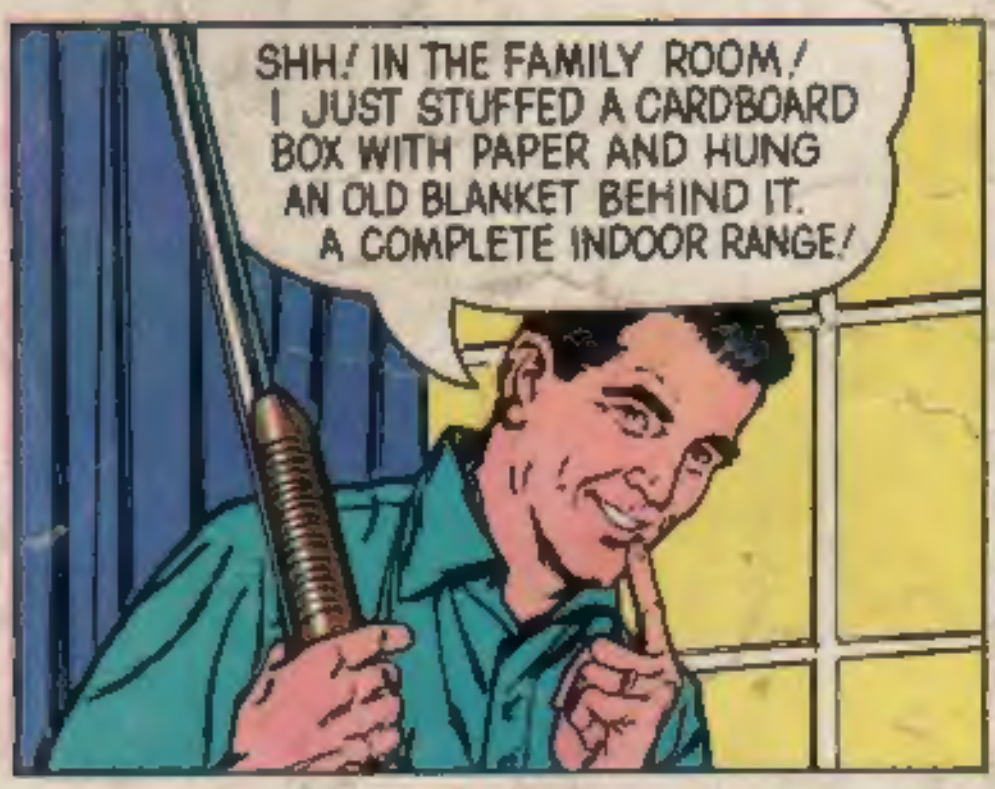
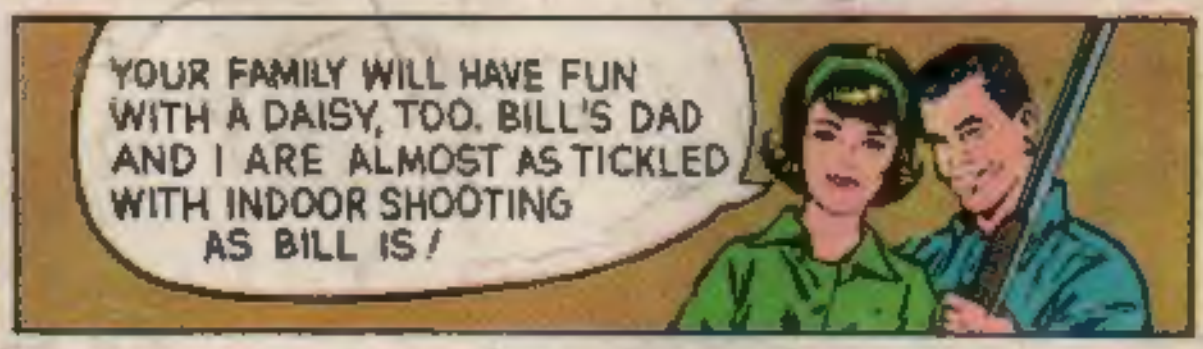

MEANWHILE... BILL'S DAD HAD AN IDEA FOR INDOOR FUN.
HMM. LOOKS JUST LIKE A REAL .22 RIFLE. BET BILL WILL LOVE THIS ONE.
IT'S DAISY'S NEW MODEL 26. A "SPITTIN' IMAGE" OF THE POPULAR REMINGTON "FIELDMASTER" ...PERFECT IN EVERY DETAIL.

I KNOW BILL'S BIRTHDAY ISN'T UNTIL WEDNESDAY, BUT HE'S BEEN WANTING THIS DAISY B.B. GUN FOR A LONG TIME. TODAY'S THE DAY TO GIVE IT TO HIM.
TODAY? BUT WHERE WILL HE SHOOT?





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